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NAME THIS CHILD.

WHAT shall we call it? The baby has come, we are told; whether it is a boy or a girl, the mamma and it are 'as well as can be expected'—mystic formula!—and then comes the final question, what is to be its name?

'I should like a pretty one,' mamma murmurs from her snuggery of dimity and pillows; and she looks at the little purple bundle breathing with that wonderfully impressive calm, and puts a kiss upon as much as there is to kiss of its wonderfully unimpressive face; and as, at such times as this, mamma's wish becomes pleasantly executed law, all the pretty names within ken are collected, and are said over, and thought about, and canvassed, and written down, till the one agreed upon as the prettiest of all is chosen, and the deed done.

This choosing a name by sound belongs to civilisation. It was not so with nations in their infancy. They went by sense. They fixed on a name that described the child, that referred to its personal characteristics, that was an outlet for their piety and thanksgiving, that was owned already by something that they were grateful for and loved. The Jewish mother—as long ago as the days chronicled in the Bible—rocked her baby on her breast, and as she sat among the flocks, and birds, and flowers, called it Susanna, lily; or Hadasseh, myrtle; or Zophar, her little bird; or Deborah, the bee, that buzzed so closely it made her little one open its eyes and smile. Or, joyous and poetic in her luxuriant land, the timid sheep were bleating by, and she called her babe Rachel, in their memory; or the rich fruit of the pomegranate overhung her, and gave her food, and she called her baby Tabrimon; or the palm-tree rose straight and tall, and so her child should, and be named Tamar; or the sparrows twittered in her ear, and her child was Zipper; or the dove cooed softly, and she called it Jonah; or the crow shewed its sable plumage, and its name was Caleb; or the light seed-down was wafted by her, and her babe was Julia, the tender, delicate, nestling little thing. Carmi, my vineyard, the Israelites' child became, when they were

grateful for that source of their happiness and wealth; or Eshcol, the full cluster of ripe, purple grapes; or Lot, sweet-scented myrrh; or Peninnah and Pinon, pearl; or Thahash, the tender tint of hyacinth, fragrant and pale; or Ulla, a young child; or Saph, the moss growing so plentifully at their feet on the bright sea-shore. And then Hebrew parents mourned over a sickly child, and called it Abel, because they saw it was like breath or vapour, and would soon pass away; or they named it Delilah, weak; or Hagar, timorous stranger; or Jabez, sorrow; or Job, a weeper; or Leah, weary; or Necho, lame. And the robust child, the sturdy, strong young fellow was rejoiced in, and called Elah, the tall, spreading oak; or Amos, weighty; or Asher, bliss; or Ruth, contentment; or Rebekah, fat; or, more poetically still, Abigail, the father's joy; Eve, the gladdener; Isaac, laughter; Nahum, comforter; and David—sweet and tender utterance—beloved.

Milkah, queen; Naomi, beautiful; Zuph, a honeycomb; Kezia, the sweet spice cassia; Laban, gentle—crooned out the Hebrew mothers as they kissed their babes; or with their little arms as a collar about their necks, and worn there, they should be Anak; or they should be Ariel, the altar on which all offerings should be laid; or Elnathan, God's own gift; or Asael, God's work; or Absalom, the father's peace; or Barnabas, the son of consolation; or Benjamin, the son of the right hand. 'Thou art Barabbas,' the son of shame, was mourned out once, as a little face was hid; and Benoni! Benoni! son of my sorrow, fell the Hebrew cry; and a little child was hidden, and called Esther; and it was known that one would have to labour, and it was called Ebed; and that another would be a drawer of water, and it was Adaliah; and little twins came, and one was Ahimoth, for he was the only one that breathed, and it was fit to give him a name that meant he was the brother of death. Deeply went religious feeling with these fervent Jews. Gedaliah, God is my greatness, is a proof of it; and Micah, or Michael, who is like to God; and Seraiah, the Lord is my prince; and Shelumiel, God is my happiness; and Abijah, and Adonijah,

my Father, my Master is the Lord. And then, in contradistinction to this, fierce savagery had loud expression, and the little Hebrew children became fantastically, and to keep their enemies in fear, Laish, lion; Saul, destroyer; Radmah, thunder; Jareb, the revenger; Irad, the wild ass; Jael, the kid; Potiphar, the African bull; or they owned the names corresponding exactly to trumpet, flea, horse, fox, worm, hornet, rabbit, goat, deer, locust, snake, and wasp.

The early Greeks chose their names upon the same plan. The young mother walked rejoicing among the mountains and the vines, and called her child Chloe, the green herb; or Rhoda, a rose; or Dagon, corn; or Drusilla, watered by the dew; or Euodias, sweet scent; or Tryphena, delicious; or Lois, better; or Epaphroditus, handsome; or Erastus, lovely; or Diana, perfect, best of all. She had—besides thousands of others that only want the looking for, or will rise to the memory at once—her Jason, he who cures; her Apollo, the destroyer; her Andronicus, the man of victory; her Nicholas, the conqueror; her Herod, the hero's son; her Stephanas, the reward, the crown. And the Latins, though passing into another stage, and taking, lazily, to numbering their people, and calling them Secundus, Tertius, Quartus, Quintus, Sextus, Septimus, Octavius, Decimus; or to naming them after their birth-month, and dubbing them Januarius, Martius, Maia, Junius, Julius, Augustus: the Latins made use of the same system still. Taurus, the roaring bull, was a name with them, when they lived by depredation, and wished to make their enemies afraid; and Gallus, the cruel cock; and Aquila, the eagle; and Leo, the lion; and Glaucus, a fish. Then they commemorated personal peculiarities, and had their Cesar and their Agrippa from incidents at their birth; and they had their Varus, crooked-legged; and their Claudias, lame; and their Bambalio, stuttester; and their Brutus, stupid; and their Tacitus, dumb. And there was the admiration and reminiscence of bright flowers, and girls walked about in Rome as beautiful as they, and known by the same sweet names. Ceanothe, the wild vine bloom, a little baby-girl was called; and Althea, the purple mallow; and Euphrosyne, bugloss; and Artemisia, motherwort; and Sabina, savine; and Sisera, the crimson heath; and Olivia, the fruit of olives; and Daphne, the healthy bay. The violet, Ion, was used for a man; but Viola, the snowdrop, was appropriated to girls; and so was Flavia, an ear of corn; and Laura, the laurel; and Hedera, ivy; and Rosa, a rose; and Circe, deadly nightshade; and Flora, the keeper and goddess of them all.

There is a people—to be swept from existence before history opens for them, and they can speak of their barbarism as past—the Indians of North America, who can be cited here as an illustration of this sensible and poetic name-choosing now. They see things, and straightway the names of these things are used to distinguish men. Fancy, fear, respect, or love, makes these interesting people (and of course all others at the same flow; it is only for convenience this race is selected). These people have such names amongst them as Flying Cloud, Red Man's Terror, Buffalo, and Fleet Wind, with a host of others with which Catlin has made us familiar, and of which Longfellow, in his *Hiawatha*, has made such poetic use. They see the scudding bird, and they call their people by it;

they are deafened by the foaming fall, and some man more angry than the rest is known by the name it bears; they are scared by the thunder's noise, and some stern warrior is called the Roaring of the Sky, the Thunderer, the Blast, or by some name equivalent to all. Scarcely an object on earth or in air, or a physical or moral qualification, real or assumed, but has stood sponsor to these semi-savage men and women, and given them a descriptive name. And if we want a proof that this kind of naming belongs, at any rate, to the *undress* of civilisation, let us take ourselves. We have a darling little girl, whose name, perhaps, is Sophia Wilhelmina, and we lay by the splendid appellation, and because her head is shining with pretty golden curls, we call her Friz. We have a naughty little boy, who sheared those locks away one day industriously, and we discard the name bestowed upon him with baptismal pomp, and he is known as Snip. In the familiarity of the larger nursery, when the moustaches have come, and fashion is a *sine quâ non*, have not sobriquets extensive usage, and such clinging life that they sometimes never die? Some physical defect, a tint, a tone; some outrageous bedeckment, some prominent virtue or vice, distinguishes us, and a wit seizes it instantly and aptly, and, glib and current, his christening remains, and we might as well possess no other name. It is ugly to cite the 'professional' names of our English fighting-men and thieves as a proof of the same state of half-barbarity, but they are so. These invariably drop the, to them, meaningless John, or Robert, or Henry, given to them at birth, and revel in some *nom de guerre*, descriptive of personal characteristics or their exploits. A sound is not enough for some grades of mind; there must be some definite thing; and the Fighting Chicken, Double-thumbed Bob, the Tipton Slasher, Creamy Jill, are but British recurrences to the days of food-hunting, and war-cries, and paint. They are disguised, it is true, by the black cloud of slang whence they originated, and without a knowledge of which it is impossible to know to what qualifications they refer; but the same need of some tangible thing, of some appellation that shall describe what the person is, or what the person thinks himself, or what he is hoped by himself or others some day to be, is observable in all.

As civilisation progressed, names were not given in memory of things, or blemishes, or beauties, but in memory of people. Affection or indolence soon induced nations to invent nothing new, but to use names that had been in use before. This fact entirely takes all certainty as to individuals' characteristics away, and throws all theory completely over; that is to say, being sure, as we are, that the Latins and Greeks, for instance, used names implying personal defects, we have not the slightest surety as to the people to whom these names were first applied. It is a pity we are thus adrift. It would stamp the man so well in our imagination, if, knowing that Strabo means, in Latin a 'goggle'-eyed man, we could be sure that the Greek geographer possessed that optical defect. We should have the same help in picturing to ourselves Cincinnatus, which means a person with crisply curling hair, if we knew that the Roman dictator was the first who owned the name. And, again, the fact would not be without its value, if we could decide whether the Turkish pirate, Barbarossa (meaning, uncomplimentarily, a *fellow* with

a red beard), was called so because he was red-bearded, or merely in memory of some Rufus of an ancestor dead long before he was born. It is true, probability points to these having really been nick-names, or surnames, as this species of nomenclature afterwards developed into, for they are scarcely of a nature to have been fixed upon at birth. In the case of Strabo, for example, his Greek mother, no more than any other, would have suffered her little one then to have been stigmatised as 'goggle'-eyed; it is the *affichement* of a stranger's lips rather than of those that kissed and loved; and Cincinnatus, when his Roman mamma first fondled him, instead of being distinguished by his curly locks, could have had but very little hair upon his wee round pate at all. Barbarossa—literally, *barba rossa*, or Rousseau, as it has become rounded to in France—is more clearly still the designation of no baby, but a man; for, however indulgent we may be on the points of hair and eyes, we are not going to believe that Turkish infants are born with beards. But we have no anchorage on this point. There comes the probability, that these Greek, and Roman, and Turkish ladies never knew the meaning of the names affixed to their pretty boys. They might have been no more careful or learned than more modern mammas who dub their babies; for example, Bitterness (Mary), when they think them very sweet indeed, or call them Lamentable Voice (Claud), when their feeblest cry is the most precious music they can hear. We can be upset over this little matter, whichever way we turn. Centuries are stubborn over it, and refuse to roll away and bring us and our ancestors face to face. We must leave it where it is.

With regard to surnames—which are simply the stereotypes of sobriquets or nick-names, clinging to a race instead of an individual—we are sure they were chosen for sense, and were fixed upon grown-up men. There became such a multitude of Joans and Johns, as these little islands of ours—for we will confine ourselves to them—grew thick with people, and when, moreover, there was communication between one clan and another, as conquerors landed and armies spread, it became a necessity to find some means of denoting which Joan or John was meant. Out came that original, decisive, satisfactory system of naming after some personal beauty or disfigurement, evident to everybody who had eyes, and therefore per force the first to come to use; a man with crooked legs was Cruickshanks, and one with a hunch upon his back was Crump; and a man was notable for his Greathead, or his Tightfoot, or his Broadfoot; or he was Strong i' th' arm, or its inverse Armstrong; or he was Pretty, Hansom, Bland, Blyth; Sterne, Strong, Sharp, Short; Large, Small, Little (which of course was Petty), Hale; a Coward, a Slowman, Sniart, or Quick. Then to call people by the names of the countries whence they came, was a sensible way of knowing them apart. The fact of this plan having been adopted, furnishes us with a curious proof of the cosmopolitan ingredients of which our nation is composed. We may tell by it that there journeyed here a Finn, a Russ, and a Pole; that people came who were jeered at as Frank, and French, and Francis, and who hissed out Inglis in return; that France gave us also a Norman and a Le Breton, and men from Lisle, and Lyons, and some from Gascony called Gascoyne; folks sailed here also from Canton and from Spain; and there came a Savage and a Moor, and a Blackmore and

a Blackman, and Redmen and Saracens, which is Sarsons now by wear; and so many people from the Germany so closely tied to us, they are represented by Jarman, Allman, Aleman, D'Almaine, Holland, Fleming, and Dutch.

Personal characteristics and birthplaces did not, however, afford scope enough for the selection or the endurance of surnames. There were people with no particular distinction that could be pointed out—meek, soulless, average creatures, with no feature of their own; there were people who would not have stood the branding, if there were any for them, but would have fought their way to something else; there were so many people swarming up from the awakened towns, or merely changing their abodes in them, it became necessary to indicate from which portion of them they came. This gave such names as Street, Hill, Brook, Green, Bourne, Marsh, Tree; and when, after an hour or two's thinking, an exhaustive (and very wearying) list of these could be made, there would be no semblance of an end. They may nearly all be multiplied by their translation into French, and Italian, and German, to say nothing of our own Keltic tongues, and the old English that drove them all away. Great allowance must be made in tracing these for the wear and tear of time and usage; for the straining they received owing to the repetition of the foreign sound by alien lips; to its falling even then upon a dull or deafened ear; to its disguisement after that by a thickened or too thin utterance; to its subsequent improper spelling; to its alteration even after that by being pronounced as it was written, or as the new reader's custom made him represent the sound. As examples, of easy recognition, of these imported names, there are Orme, French for elm; Eicke (probably the familiar Hicks), German for oak; Bach, hardened into Back, German for brook; Hurst, that means wood, and Worth and Word. Then by and by, so many more people were congregated in these localities, and near these noted objects—so many people lived near the Lane, or in the Croft and Meadows, subdivision again must take place, and they must be known by their condition or trade. This, again, is a thoroughly primitive plan, and had for its groundwork sense. People were named after the ecclesiastical offices that they filled. Of these, there may be given readily an interesting list. There are Abbot, Bishop, Cardinal, and Pope, with the French for it, Pape, as well; there are Deacon, Dean, Elder, Fryer; Sexton, Monck, Priest, Prior; Clark, Parsons, of which Farrer is a variety, being but the German Pfarrer, with the first letter dropped; Chaplin, Peregrine, Pilgrim, Palmer; Templer, Templeman, with the Chappell, Church, or Temple to which they all belonged. And people were named after offices held by them, or titles given to them by the state. The descendants of these may provide themselves with an ancestry at once, if they will only think of the signification of their names. What a proud thing it is to be a King, or Roy, as the name stood when it first crossed here from France; how nice it is to think one of our forefathers was a Noble, or a Prince, or a Margrave, or an Earl; or that he was Chancellor of this strong land, or a Challenger or a Marshall, or a Knight. It is not a bad thing to have had a Constable for a great-great-great-grandfather, when constable meant something so very different from policeman X. And a Chevalier did good service, and so did a Horsman, which is the English

of it; and a Warder, Burgess, Major, and Page; and a Reeve, Sheriff, Beadle, and Maire; and a Champion, Yeoman, Falconer, and Squire.

It may not be very acceptable, perhaps, to some of us who bear these names now, to think our ancestors were in the condition they describe, but it must be the truth; were a man a Freeman, he would not have been likely to be called Bond; and if he were a bailiff (Bailey), he would not have been likely to be elevated to a doctor (Leach). The deduction must be abided by, unpalatable as it may be; and there is room for plenty of deductions more. Pertaining to a household of the olden time, there was the Chamberlayne; and there were the Butler, and the Baker, and the Cook, with the Cookson to help him make the cakes; and the Brewer to brew good beer; and the Gardner, and Hunter, and Fisher, and Fowler, and the Groom to come in hot from their toil, and drink it; and the Forrester, Ranger, Woodman, Parker, Grover, Sheppard, and Hind to have their share of the good draught too. And if the house wanted mending, there were the Mason, Sawyer, Glaisier, Painter, Plummer, Thatcher, Carpenter, Tyler, and the Smith, ready at once to do it; and they had but to go to the Marchant, Brazier, Naylor, Leadbetter, Tinker, Sclater, and the Turner, and they could get all the materials to set to work. Whosoever's name is Taylor, may be sure one of his ancestors made clothes; whosoever's name is Glover, may be as sure his progenitors made (or sold) gloves; and the Draper sold *drap*, the French for cloth; the Tucker sold the same (or made it), from *Tuch*, the German for it; and these were helped by the Dresser and the Webber (weaver), the Skinner and the Tanner, the Fuller and the Dyer; all of whom trusted their wares to the Chapman, the Hawker, and the Pedler, to sell them when they were done. All folks owning the patronymic Spicer had no more aristocratic origin, except they may say they came over with the Conqueror, for the name was *Epicier* when first heard here from France; and the Chandlers had French 'beginnings,' for they made *chandelles*; and the Fletchers also, who manufactured arrows, which their Gallic lips called *fleches*, and of whom the Arrowsmiths are lineal descendants, or else rivals to dispute with them when they came. The almost countless number of trades that might be added to these—Waggoner, Wainwright; Carter, Cartwright; Plowman, Plowright; Wheeler, Wheelwright; Driver, Drover, Farrier, Sadler—would be too tiresome, and it shall be left here.

It is a pity the meaning of our own English names passes us without recognition just as easily as these. We are busy; we say a word so often, we get to associate the thing we mean with it, instead of the thing that would be ringing in our ears, if we would only pause. We speak of the Strand, for example, and we think of *our* Strand; we define; we put a capital letter to the obsolete little noun, and we think of our local Strand, that is a confusion of vehicles, shops, and people, and that sets our pulses stirring with its exciting roar. We never think of the sloping ground that was yellow gravel, and that had grass, and rushes, and pretty water-flowers to edge it, and that was laved with tiny ripples, that sparkled under the moon; we never think of the river-walk that would have been once so pleasant, with its view of skimming boats and barges, and its seats to lounge and laugh in half the sunny day. But it is only intended here to suggest by the names thus rapidly gone

through. They have been enumerated before; they have been spoken of fully, and in the true spirit of philology. It was only thought there might be room perhaps for this little notice more. Often the mere turning a picture about will bring bits and touches to light that before had lain unseen. Anyhow, the moving it an inch from the wall can do no harm: it makes us look up, vexed, to think the treasure has been touched; and in that annoyed glance may come to us another truth. So it may be now.

MY SECOND YEAR'S HOLIDAY.

SECOND ARTICLE.

SUNDAY, July 28.—A tranquil morning, at anchor in Balta Sound. All is hushed on board the *Pharos*. The crew is at rest; and Milo, grown somewhat obese, lies stretched out on the well-scrubbed deck. We hear no sound in our cabins but the low gurgling ripple of the water on the exterior of the vessel. The weather is still dull, and the sky overcast; but the drizzle has ceased, and there is a prospect of a tolerably pleasant walk to the parish church of Unst, which is spoken of as being little more than a mile distant in the direction of Burra Fiord. We see the road to it across the open heath, for roads, under the inspiration of an act of parliament, are beginning to make their appearance in these remote islands.

After breakfast, I am waited on by Captain Graham, to propose that divine service should be performed on board—say at a quarter to eleven o'clock, to allow time for afterwards going to church, if the Commissioners are disposed to go ashore. The service is to take place, as is customary, in the saloon, where the whole ship's company are to assemble. As commodore, I am expected to undertake the office of chaplain.

A few minutes before the appointed time, the steward spreads the Commissioners' flag on the table, and on it lays a large Bible, with which is bound up a printed prayer by the late Rev. Dr Brunton of Edinburgh, which, imperfect as I think in several particulars, I supplement from the *Book of Common Prayer*. At the sounding of the ship's bell, the whole company, in naval uniform, with Bibles in their hands, enter the saloon, and are accommodated with seats. The assemblage was decent and devout, and not a little interesting. The effect was considerably heightened by all singing the 100th Psalm, the tune of which was raised in proper style by a young gentleman, son of the Secretary, whom we had the pleasure of having with us. The service occupied about half an hour, after which all the party but myself went ashore to church. I had to refrain from going with them on account of the peculiar chilliness of the air, which seemed to pierce through me and cause a tendency to shivering. Left alone at the fireside in the saloon, I spent the forenoon with such solacement as could be gathered from a well-stocked library.

On deck at two o'clock, I see, by means of a field-glass, the people from the church dispersing over

the bare slopes of the island to their several homes. Our party, which is approaching the boat, where it lies at the small quay near Bunes, I observe, is recruited by two strangers, with whom an acquaintanceship had been made at church, and who were invited on board to luncheon. They prove to be two men of science out on an exploratory expedition, their chief object being to dredge for varieties of hitherto unknown shells on these wild northern shores. It is curious that, go where one will, he falls in with persons who know something of him, or with whom there is some bond of intimacy. One of the gentlemen in question knew my brother while he resided in London, and I had met the brother of the other several years ago in Dublin. An agreeable conversation accordingly ensued on matters of scientific and social concern. Talking of marine mollusca, I referred to the small species of *Buccinum Lapillus* which inhabits the shelving cliffs of the Bell Rock, as one of the most cunning and destructive little wretches in creation. When the light-house was erected there, sixty years ago, by the late Robert Stevenson, it appeared to be a good thing to bring quantities of large mussels from the neighbourhood of Arbroath, and plant them on the rock, for the benefit of the light-house keepers. The benevolent project proved unavailing; for the poor defenceless mussels became a ready prey to the buckies, which seemed to lead a very harmless sort of life among the crevices left exposed by the reflux tides. Possessing a proboscis with a power of boring beyond what could be imparted by the keenest gimlet, they fell upon the mussels, and piercing holes in their sides, deliberately sucked them clean out; and so the colony of bivalves was soon extirpated. On the shores of Shetland, as I heard, there are favourable spots for planting oyster-beds, and Mr Edmonstone said he was about to make the trial. Whether mussels may be colonised with a better chance of success than at the Bell Rock, will have to be gravely considered. The two conchologists had not been very successful in their researches, in consequence of the bad weather, and they intended soon to depart, in order to be in time for the approaching meeting of the British Association. I ventured to hope that the sermon which the party had that day heard delivered at the parish church had been quite satisfactory; all spoke of it with more approbation than of the church itself, which, they said, looked as if it had not been swept or dusted for years.

One, however, should not expect to find here the trim order in which things are kept in populous and wealthy communities. Unst, like most other parts of Shetland, is at present experiencing an excessive pressure of local rates. Formerly, the poor used to get only two or three shillings a year for clothes, and were sent adrift from house to house for subsistence. But the new poor-law has changed all that. The udaller informed us that the poor-rates on his property amount to four shillings and tenpence per pound per annum on his valued rent, and that after paying *scatt*—an

old Norwegian tax on land perpetuated as a species of feu-duty—and other public burdens, he does not get more than half his nominal rental. Probing the matter of rates, I learned that there was as yet no poor-house in Shetland to test the applications of paupers, and act as a stimulus to exertion; wherefore, as I hinted, there did not appear to be anything to prevent the whole rental of the islands from being diverted to the maintenance of the poor. Throughout the country, a middle class can scarcely be said to have grown up. There are proprietors, and a vast number of small tenants who pay their rent mostly in fish; to procure which the male inhabitants go to sea, and hang about the curing-stations, while the duty of attending to the land and to work generally, falls, in a great measure, to the share of the women—a system of social economics which seldom comes to any good. In a few places, cottages have been pulled down, and their impoverished inhabitants got rid of, the land so cleared being thrown into farms of reasonable extent; but elsewhere, everything, as far as I could learn, is on a rude, primitive type.

Monday, July 29.—The scene suddenly shifts. At half-past six o'clock, the anchor is heaved, steam is raised, and at seven the *Pharos* is pursuing its way out of Balta Sound, and once more facing the open sea.

'Well, commodore, where are we bound for now?' said one of the gentlemen on board, ascending to the gangway over the chart-room.

'We are,' I replied, 'going northward round the Seaw of Unst, in order to have a look at the light-house on the Mickle Flugga: as for landing at it, that, I fear, will be impossible, for there is still a heavy sea on; but we shall at all events shew ourselves to the keepers, and see some fine scenery in passing along the coast.'

The starting of the vessel, and the intelligence that we were going round by the Flugga, brought all the party on deck, and eyes were eagerly turned to the jagged, iron-bound coast along which we were driving. Both from the nature of the rocks and the violence of the sea, the coast of Shetland is generally abrupt, and we can observe that, from the more precipitous parts, large masses, after being undermined, have slid down and been engulfed in the ocean. The rocky structure of Unst is rich in chromate of iron, an article which, until lately, was quarried to a considerable extent, and exported by Mr Edmonstone; competition from foreign countries has unfortunately ruined this valuable trade, and at present some thousands of tons remain unsaleable at a remunerating price. The stoppage of this branch of industry has of course limited the already too scanty means of employment on the island. The rocky shore, however, if not commercially productive, is at least strikingly picturesque, and would afford some fine studies for the marine artist.

Approaching Burra Fiord, we come in sight of two dark protuberances in the sea, at the distance of about two miles from land. On the larger of the two, which is nearest the shore, the light-house we are in quest of has been built. As these unshapely islets are out of the line of ordinary navigation, the planting of a light-house on one of them appears to be of doubtful utility. The work, it is proper to say, was not undertaken by the Commissioners until they were urged to do so by government during the progress of the Russian

War, when a British squadron was expected to cruise in these northern latitudes. The history of the building of the light-house on the Mickle Flugga, as the larger islet is termed, would be as full of feats of daring and ingenuity as that of the tower of Skerryvore. The islet rises to a height of two hundred feet from the water, and is so rugged and precipitous as to be accessible only by steps cut in the southern or lowest side. On the summit, and overhanging the northern cliff, stands the light-house, a tower fifty feet high, surrounded by a wall, within which is embraced rooms for the storage of coal, oil, and other articles, the whole of which are hoisted from the landing vessel by means of a windlass and species of railway fixed at a slope on the surface of the rock. The execution of the various works, including houses for the families of the keepers at Burra Fiord, of which we have a glimpse in passing, cost thirty-two thousand pounds. The expense of light-house maintenance is greatly increased by the erection being placed on a solitary reef or islet; for in this case, four keepers (three of whom must always be on duty) are required instead of two. There is also much expense for boats and boatmen, besides storage of provisions. Worst of all, the keepers are liable, from stress of weather, to be cut off for weeks from the mainland, and doomed to compulsory exile on the rock, long after the time they should be relieved. This seemed to be the condition of the keepers belonging to the light-house now under notice. The sea rolled towards the islet in long swelling waves, which broke in swirling surges against the only landing-place, and rendered our visit impracticable. This was not less a disappointment to us than to the three keepers, who, hoisting their flag in our honour as soon as we came in sight, watched with sorrowful interest the vessel standing off, and pursuing a course towards the channel which divides Unst from Yell. And so that strangely placed light-house, with its flag wildly fluttering in the wind, and its keepers wandering like disturbed spirits round its lofty outworks, was left behind in its dismal solitude—a thing to intrude on remembrance in the wakeful moments of night, when we think of these distant regions, and the inclemencies to which they are exposed.

On this memorable morning, which saw us compass the undoubted Ultima Thule, breakfast was put off for half an hour, in order that we might sit down with comfort in the comparative tranquillity of a sheltered sound. With Unst and afterwards Fetlar on our left, and the large island of Yell on our right, the *Pharos* pursued its way undisturbed, and the further south we advanced the weather continued to improve. By the ship's officers, Fetlar was described as being considerably cleared of its old cotter system, and transformed into pastoral farms of a modern type. The island, I was informed, is one of those from which ponies of the small Shetland breed continue to be exported.

Doubling on our former course, we were abreast of Whalsay Skerries about noon; but again no landing could be effected on the outer skerry, or small rocky islet on which the light-house is placed. A boat, however, was able to reach the larger island, containing the houses for the families of the keepers. This station, which we inspected, is not satisfactory. Besides suffering from an imperfect supply of water, the dwellings are planted on an exposed brow overlooking the sea, and being unprotected by a surrounding wall, are open to all

the storms that can blow. Who are responsible for this and some other defects which are prolific of constant outlay? Not the Commissioners of Northern Light-houses, but the Board of Trade, which, in the exercise of its statutory controlling power, screws down estimates, and by a penny-wise system of procedure, has inflicted evils to which it is anything but pleasant for me to allude. The Scottish light-house establishments of recent date for the most part poorly compare in point of substantiality and comfort with those of earlier origin, when the Commissioners were not subject to this kind of control.

Passing Ness Head, the vessel bore us into Bressay Sound, which separates the island of Bressay on the east from the mainland of Shetland on the west. On a prominent headland on our right stands Bressay light-house, which we are fortunately able to visit and inspect. Immediately afterwards, the *Pharos* steamed up the Sound to Lerwick, the capital of Shetland. In approaching it, we see, on a prominent knoll on our left, some modern buildings of tasteful architecture, the gift of Mr Anderson, a native of the town, and designed for an academy and retreat for a certain class of aged persons. Behind the knoll, in front of a finely-sheltered bay, we find Lerwick, built in a most irregular manner on the gentle declivity of a hill, with an eastern exposure. The most conspicuous feature in its character is that the houses nearest to us are built with their gables into or close upon the water, with intervening steps or slips of quay which lead to the main street, if so it can be called; for it is nothing more than an irregular lane, varying in breadth, but at the narrowest parts sufficiently wide to admit the passage of a cart. With lanes of lesser dimensions extending to the higher and more open parts of the town, and with buildings set down with little attention to regularity, there is altogether a foreign dash about Lerwick, or at least an air of novelty, according to our conceptions. There is one thing about it deserving of special notice, and that is the fact of its thoroughfares being well paved all over with flagstones, as is the case with Genoa and Naples. For this peculiarity, it is doubtless indebted to the prevalence of that kind of stone in the neighbourhood, which is easily quarried in flat slabs for pavement. Why the outer fringe of buildings should be set down within sea-mark, is not commonly explained, and we are left to conjecture that this fashion of house-building has had something to do with the landing of articles without the formality of paying customs-duties. Lerwick, however, is not an old town; probably not older than the middle of the seventeenth century; the original capital of the country having been Scalloway, a decayed town, with the ruins of a castle on the west side of the mainland, which, I am sorry to say, in spite of the best intentions, we had no opportunity of visiting.

While several of our party landed to visit Fort Charlotte, which commands the harbour, and could effectually protect the shipping, I proceeded with the sheriff of Wigtonshire to make some calls in the town. But we could not have done so at a more inopportune period. It was five o'clock in the afternoon; the mail-steamer for Granton, which was seen lying at anchor, was to depart at half-past six, and the whole community were engaged in writing their letters for the south. This is a serious affair, for there is a dispatch only at intervals of several days; and what in these circumstances will

not one do to avoid ceremonial interruptions? I am afraid our visit was inconvenient in more places than one; yet nothing could exceed the politeness with which we were received. If my limited experience is worth anything, it goes to verify the reputation which the Shetland gentry have acquired for their hospitable and kindly feelings. One of the objects of our intrusive calls was to offer invitations to dinner; and as a result, the Commissioners were favoured with the company of Mr Muir, the recently settled sheriff-substitute, and of one of the Messrs Hay, whose firm possesses the chief import and export trade of the place. It need hardly be said that the great article of export is dried white fish, chiefly ling and tusk, vast quantities of which are carried away annually for Spanish consumption. In preparation for these exports, piles of fish are seen stacked up along the coasts, to be sent with boats in due season to Lerwick. The exports generally of Shetland have been much increased in recent times by the introduction of steam-communication; so much is this the case, that the prices of all native produce have risen, and the cost of articles of daily consumption at Lerwick does not greatly differ from what it is at Edinburgh. One particular export deserves to be noticed; I refer to those knitted woollen articles, which, for fineness and tastefulness, have obtained a wide celebrity. In the produce of these articles by hand-labour, there is manifested an extraordinary amount of feminine industry, which, it is to be hoped, meets with a fair reward. At my request, a young and skilled *tricoteuse* was sent on board to exhibit the knitted wares she had for sale, and she offered for inspection some shawls of remarkably delicate texture, one of which I purchased to take home as a present. Knitting seems universal. Women of a humble class may be observed busy at this kind of work while engaged in carrying back-loads of peats into Lerwick, or when on their way to some sort of rural occupation.

In the course of conversation with our guests at dinner, I was curious to know how far the old Norwegian traditions and usages had disappeared before modern improvements, and learned that little of them remains, at least in Lerwick and its neighbourhood. Mr Hay expressed some regret that the once useful official, the Ranzelman, whose duties somewhat resembled those of a bailie and head-constable, had vanished along with the Fowdes, or aboriginal magistrates, of different degrees of importance; but it is not clear that the united action of a procurator-fiscal and a sheriff is either quite so cheap or so expeditious in composing differences as that of the Ranzelman of a former polity. Superstitions and old prejudices are said to be by no means extinct. The minister of Mid and South Yell, in his Statistical Account of that parish, written as lately as 1841, makes the remarkable statement that, at that date a belief in the curative effect of the royal touch for scrofula and consumption prevailed throughout the islands; but as royalty is not obtainable, an equally effective substitute consists in a few half-crowns of the coinage of Charles I., carefully preserved in certain families; and that there are few localities in Shetland in which a living evidence is not to be found of one said to have been 'cured by the coin.' An amusing instance this of the perpetuation of a superstition which has long been relinquished elsewhere.

Dinner-party broke up at ten—for the *Pharos*

keeps good hours—and bidding our guests farewell, see them handsomely off in a six-oared boat for the not far-distant shore. We all turn in, and the ship lies quietly at anchor for the night.

W. C.

ONE OF THE FAMILY.

CHAPTER XIII.—MILES RIPSON AT HOME.

HERBERT WARTON did not keep his promise of returning to Dewbank Hall after his visit to Milthwaite, notwithstanding that his patient did not detain him long there. He returned home, had his horse put in stable, and took his way on foot to Ander Nook. There was nothing out of the usual course or difficult in the cases under his charge at present which might make a man of science and benevolence pause and ponder in his walk, though the doctor did so again and again as he climbed the well-known hill; but the fact was, he was not thinking of diagnoses. 'A hundred guineas if it's a boy,' muttered he: 'that unexpected piece of liberality will stand me in good stead, and help to swell the prize to something worth the gaining. But if it's a girl after all—what mean scoundrels are your rich men!—in that case, the reward will not be worth the risk—not that there's much risk; and besides I must have money. What a fool that woman was to marry Murphy; and he to—— Well, I hope it will be a boy, if only because it will serve them both right. I shall scarcely get another chance of bettering myself that way. Think of a man like me at forty-four, and only a parish doctor!' The wood was thick, but yet so low that a tall man like him could look above the hazel tops, and he stopped, and turned to do so; not because the sleeping valley, bathed in the radiance of the moon, had any charms for him, or the sublime solitude of the mountain summits, or the silver gleam of Ander Tarn just coming into view. The odorous breath of a thousand flowers came up to him in vain—in vain the solemn silence smote upon his ear, and strove to woo him from his sordid cares and crimes. 'Damn the world and all things in it!' exclaimed the wretched man. 'What have I done, to find myself, at my age, worse than a beggar; obliged to play the courtier to a country squire, and to become the tool of a'—

'Krake, krake, krake, krake!' cried a hoarse voice, apparently so close beside him that the doctor stopped short in his soliloquy, and turned sharply round. It was only the cornercrake in the little field on the other side of the copse; but the interruption put an end for the present to his bitter thoughts, and he strode on to his destination. The long low house lay in shadow, shut out not only from the prospect which it might have commanded, but even from sunlight and moonbeam, by a high brick wall, so that Dr Warton could not only approach unseen, but even peer in at the open door, while those within were unconscious of his presence.

Miles Ripson was standing with his back to the great fireplace, his waistcoat unbuttoned, his neck-

cloth ragged, as if torn in some recent struggle, and his handsome face sullen with drink and ill-humour: his wife sat in an arm-chair shivering, partly with fear, partly with the cold of the night-air, but not daring to shut the door, which her lord and master had not chosen, or had been unable, to fasten on his entrance: by her side stood an old woman, in whose dark, well-marked features it was easy to recognise Miles's mother, who was apparently endeavouring, with quavering voice, to mitigate the violence of her son.

'What's the use of your putting yourself out so, Miles? We can't expect to get all we want in this world.'

'I'll get all I want, or none!' exclaimed the young savage doggedly.—'It's all this whining woman's fault,' continued he, pointing with his finger to the unhappy Mary—'she that does nothing but snivel and fret, when she might really make herself useful to me.—Why, what do you think I want you for, you tallow-cheeked, red-eyed, skinny-armed!'

'O Miles, Miles!' cried the unhappy girl, dashing her hands against her face, in impotent despair, 'how can you, can you use such cruel words!'

'Ah, you're right enough to hide your face, for I'm sure there's nothing there worth anybody's looking at.—Cruel words, indeed; take care I don't come to blows. There's many as tells me I'm a milksoop, to put up with you as I do, I can tell you. Why, you're no manner of use. I've stopped your reading for some time to come—a very good fire your precious library made, that I will say—and if you get any more books, you'll be clever to find the money, that's all I say. I haven't a shilling, a sixpence, a penny-piece, and shan't have until this rotten old place and all it contains are fairly off my hands. That chest is going to Keswick to-morrow. There's a man there who says he knows some fools who will give money for such rubbish; but I daresay he won't find 'em out in a hurry.'

'O Miles, don't part with the chest; poor uncle took such pride in it; he was very kind to me, very.'

'And I ain't, I suppose?' sneered her husband. 'Thank you, ma'am: I am not so drunk but I understand that. I think I see myself keeping that sort of lumber, when I can change it for shining gold pieces! Why, I haven't seen a guinea for these three weeks.'

'And yet, Miles,' interposed his mother soothingly, 'you are thinking of refusing a hundred of those same golden guineas—supposing at least things turn out as we hope—besides advantages in other respects such as it is impossible you could have looked for.'

'Yes, I am,' answered her son with emphasis. 'I placed my price on the article in question, and I don't abate it, no, not by a sixpence.'

'Nay, Miles,' observed his wife in hesitating and humble tones, 'you did agree at first, you know, to take what is offered.'

'Well, and what if I did, you fool? Now I want more, that's all.—When your uncle, as you talk about, saw a buyer particularly sweet about a cow or a pig, do you suppose he hadn't to pay through the nose for it?—*Promise*, do you say? Well, then, I break my promise. And I recommend you not to go throwing promises in my face, or else I'll throw something in yours as is a deal harder.—What are you muttering there about? *She can't pay any more*. Yes, she can pay more: I tell you

she can. If she hasn't got it herself, she knows where to get it.'

'Don't ye take on so,' whispered the old woman to Mary, who was sobbing and rocking herself to and fro; 'it's bad for you to vex yourself just now. Miles don't mean half he says, bless you! He'll be as bright and winsome to-morrow morn as ever he was; it's only his way when he's got the liquor in him. He has a kind heart at bottom, has my son Miles.' And the old woman threw such a look of tender and submissive devotion towards the subject of her apology as made his sullen and contemptuous face by contrast still more brutish.

'There's a pearl for a pig,' muttered Dr Warton, withdrawing himself a little from his post of espial. 'This creature has more brutal obstinacy than I could have thought possible. It will be necessary, I perceive, to use that weapon earlier which I had hoped to reserve for the time—for it is sure enough to come—when extortion should be backed by menace.—Oh, you stupid, heartless bully, if I had only had your handsome face, how different would my lot in life have been; nay, even if I had had a mother, fond, unselfish as yours— But there; it's no use snivelling, as you say, my free-spoken friend. I have my work to do, and I must go through with it. It will be some pleasure, at all events, to pull you down a peg or two. When one has dirt to go through, even though one can't expect clean shoes, it is well to get the mud off occasionally, and you shall be my scraper, Miles Ripson.' Then reapproaching the house with a preparatory cough, such as the inmates could not fail to hear, Herbert Warton presented his giant form at the still open door.

'Walk in, doctor,' said Miles surlily: 'the missus is still about, you see, although she don't look very blooming.'

'Nor, I am sorry to see, in the best of spirits,' observed the visitor gravely.—'You must keep up your spirits, Mary. We doctors are of little use when folks get out of heart.—Why, Mrs Ripson, I should have thought you had known better than to let your daughter be so low.'

'Well, sir,' answered the old lady, 'we're all low, you know, at particular times, and apt to take things more serious than they are meant.'

'I meant everything I said, if you mean *that*, mother,' growled the young ruffian. 'If a man don't say what he means in his own house, I don't know where he is to be honest.'

'Honest!' replied the doctor, looking fixedly into the speaker's face; 'I hope you're always honest, Miles.—You brought him up honest, didn't you, Mrs Ripson?'

'Miles has been always a good son to me, a good son,' answered the old lady, with somewhat more of tremor in her tone, as it seemed to her questioner, than pathos demanded.

'I don't want nobody to defend me, mother,' observed Miles doggedly, 'and more especially when I'm not attacked.'

'Very true, Ripson,' replied the doctor quietly. 'Nobody attacks you. At the same time, I will take leave to say that you have been behaving harshly to your wife here, and that, considering the circumstances'—

'You don't know nothing about the circumstances,' interrupted Miles with irritation, 'and therefore you just let my behaviour alone. You're the doctor, and not the parson; and I warn you to keep to your own business, and leave me to mine;

or,' added he after a pause, during which he twice lifted his kindling eyes in wrath, only to droop them before Herbert Warton's steady gaze, 'if it is your business as well as somebody else's, you may tell that somebody else, that in case I have the article for sale for which I have been offered a hundred guineas, my price is double the money, and not a guinea less—so there!'

'That's the last quotation in the share-market, is it, Miles Ripson? Rather a large premium upon the original stock, eh? But of course it entirely rests with you.'

'Ay,' replied the other with a sneer, 'I think it does.'

'That being the case, Miles,' continued the doctor slowly, 'why are you so moderate in your demands? The buyer is in sore need, and there is none to sell except yourself. True, you agreed to accept a certain sum, but you are more in want of money now—much more, if half I hear is true—and therefore, as is only natural, you break your word. Having once broken it, why confine yourself to asking double the money; why not four times, why not ten times that sum?'

'Two hundred guineas is my price, Dr Warton, and all the talk in the world won't bring it down even to pounds.'

'Your price, that is, for the present,' returned the doctor with emphasis.—'Ah! I thought you would catch my meaning. You're a much cleverer fellow than folks give you credit for being. They say you are not a man of business, Miles Ripson, but I perceive you are. You look ahead. You are not a scholar, like your wife here, but you have read the fable of the goose with the golden eggs.—You catch my meaning again, I see; it's quite a pleasure talking to such an intelligent listener as you.'

'Pray, go on,' said Miles contemptuously, as the doctor paused: 'you seem to know such a deal about it, it's quite a treat to hear you.'

'I am not so sure that you would think it a treat if you compel me to talk of something else that concerns you nearly, and with which I am equally well acquainted, Miles Ripson, so I will finish what seems so agreeable to you.' There was a menace in the doctor's eyes curiously at variance with his light though sarcastic tone, which made the young wrestler a patient though unwilling listener to his words; and ever and anon the latter cast an uneasy look towards his wife, which his visitor translated to mean that her presence placed him at some disadvantage.

'I say that you are calculating upon this money, Miles, as the first instalment of a series of sums which you have made up your mind to extort in future years as the price of your continued secrecy. You have very much underrated the intelligence of the person with whom you have to deal, if you suppose that this has not been foreseen. It has been foreseen, my friend.'

'Perhaps it has,' answered the other with a sneer: 'I don't care whether it has or not; but I know this, that it can't be helped.'

'You are right; it can't be helped, Miles. Since, then, you have the game in your own hands, how can you be such an infernal fool as to throw up the cards at the very outset, by insisting upon a sum which, without such risk of discovery as it would be madness to incur, the purchaser cannot raise. One hundred guineas is all that can be given, I do assure you.'

'That's a pity,' returned the other carelessly, 'because my price is two hundred.—We are early people in this house, doctor, and are going to bed. When we want you—at least when Mary wants you, for I don't care if I never see your face again—we'll send for you.—Come, you women, be off with you; I am going to shut up the house.'

The hectoring bully was himself again. He saw in his visitor only an emissary, conscious of the weakness of his principal's mission, and deputed to make his remonstrances indeed, but finally to pay all demands in full.

'Then you will not listen, I suppose, to the other matter to which I referred,' observed the doctor coolly.

'No, I will not,' answered Miles savagely; 'I will hear nothing you have to say.'

'You will like it still less, my friend, if you chance to hear it from other lips; however, that's your look-out.—Good-night, Mary.—Take care of her, Mrs Ripson. Your son is somewhat obstinate about this matter, and I hope you will use your influence with him while there is yet time. The consequences, if he remains unconvinced, will, I fear, be as serious to you as to himself.'

Pale as had been the widow's face ever since he had appealed to her concerning Miles, it grew still whiter while he spoke those words; her lips moved, as if to make reply, but no sound issued from them. Nor did Miles utter a syllable as he held the door, with sullen courtesy, for the departure of his guest.

Dr Warton walked slowly through the farmyard, slowly across the home-meadow, to the Wishing-gate, which led into the copse, then stopped and listened, the moonbeams throwing his giant form far back into the field. Presently, a door was shut with hasty violence, and a quick heavy step was heard from the direction in which he had just come.

'I thought my last words would fall on fertile ground,' muttered he grimly. 'The mushroom terror grows apace in that rank soil; and now will I bring this cowardly scoundrel upon his bended knees.'

CHAPTER XIV.—DR WARTON PUTS THE SCREW ON.

So soon as Miles Ripson (for he it was whose tread was so rapidly approaching) perceived that the doctor had halted at the Gate, he exchanged what had been a run for a saunter, took out his pipe and lit it, and leisurely dawdled down to the spot, as though he were taking an evening stroll.

'You are not gone to bed then, Miles, after all,' said Warton coolly.

'No,' answered the other with an affectation of carelessness that contrasted ludicrously enough with his suspicious eye. 'I generally stretch my legs and smoke a pipe of tobacco, the last thing.'

'And always come out without your hat, eh? just as though you had jumped up in a hurry. You find that cools your head, I daresay; and it must need that, most nights, I suspect.'

'My head's cool enough, thank you,' returned Miles savagely; but his face belied his speech. It was evident that he had delayed after his guest's departure to fortify himself with a dram; this had given him audacity; and the other's bantering words goaded him to the coward's substitute for courage—fury.

'What the devil do you want with me, Dr

Warton?' exclaimed he suddenly. 'Come, let's have it out. Who are you, to look at me like that, you drunken dog?'

'What do I want with you?' returned his companion slowly. 'That's a strange question for you to ask. Here am I going home, tired enough, after a late visit to a patient; presently, I hear a fellow running after me without his hat, as though there was Fire, and I was the parish turncock. When he comes up, the first thing he says, after he has got his breath, is, What do I want with him?'

'Don't you make a fool of me, Dr Warton,' observed Miles menacingly: 'I am not in the humour for it; mind that.'

'I had no intention of doing so, Ripson; I know that Nature has anticipated me there: you're a born fool.'

'Very good; I will remember that,' said the other slowly. 'But you have not answered my question.'

'No; because I do not see the propriety of it. You put it to me without the least justification or excuse. This is your field, I know, but I was standing in a public footway, leaning over a public gate—in point of fact, the Wishing-gate—wishing with all my heart that Miles Ripson was less pig-headed and more awake to his true interests.'

'Were you indeed?' interrupted Ripson mockingly. 'Then you might just as well have been wishing over the Hog tub.'

'Perhaps so, Miles; and yet it may be superstitious; but I rather believe in the virtue of the Wishing-gate. I seem to think you'll come to terms here, for instance, and take those hundred guineas before we part. In the meantime, just give me a light from your pipe.'

As the doctor stooped down to take it, and the fierce though tiny flame brought out his massive features, their calmness and immobility contrasted strangely enough with the working of the swarthy face, distorted with rage and hate, that was regarding it so closely.

'Did you hear the owls under Blackbarrow a while ago?' asked Miles in hoarse and half-choked tones.

'No, Ripson, I did not.'

'Then you shall hear them now.'—The young man put one hand to the side of his mouth, and sent forth a prolonged and melancholy halloo, which floating over the still valley, was repeated again and again by the opposite crags. Before the last echoes had died away, the zealous owls, like a scold battling for the last word, took them up, and 'No, no—no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, NO!' filled all the circle of the hills.—'That's my answer, Dr Warton. I will not take those hundred guineas. If you want any more replies, you must ask the owls for them.'

'We had better not part like this, Miles,' said the doctor gravely, as the other began to move homeward. 'I have spoken you fair hitherto, but I need not ask you favours. Yes; I think you are not quite in such a hurry but that you can spare me a few minutes.'

'Look you, I won't be talked to like this,' cried Ripson, turning sharply round, and retracing the step or two he had already taken. 'I don't fear you; I have nothing to fear. But I fear myself. My temper is not of the best; and take you care I do not do you a mischief.'

'You, you!' exclaimed the doctor scornfully

and drawing up his giant form to its full height; 'you do me a mischief! Cowardly dog! Why, before you could put your cunning arms round me, I would beat your face in with my fists.—Stand off, you mere dull brute, or, like a brute, you shall feel the pole-axe. Do you take me for your wife, that you dare to threaten me, Miles Ripson? Not but that I could tell your wife a secret that would make you tremble even before her.'

If the secret had been spoken then and there, it could scarce have made the young man's passionate cheek more pallid, or given to his angry eyes more of uncertainty and irresolution than it did.

'What do you mean?' cried he with some wretched dregs of his old hectoring manner yet in his tone.

'I mean that you are a scoundrel and a thief!'

'It was not me, doctor—I swear it was not me—who took the—the—'

'Go on: the letters. Who was it took them, then?'

'It was my mother.'

There was a long pause, during which Ripson moved uneasily, and wiped his mouth, and turned his hands over one another in expectation of an answer, and the doctor continued to gaze at him with wonder and unutterable contempt.

'Why don't you speak to me?' continued the wrestler peevishly. 'I have told you that it was my mother, and not me.'

'I heard you, Miles Ripson, although I could scarce believe my ears; and I feel in some sort grateful to you for your excuse. I daresay you have no very high opinion of my morality, and you are quite right. I am what the world, I daresay—for the world is censorious—would not hesitate to call a scoundrel; and I am also, as you say, "a drunken dog." But by contrast with you, I feel myself an honest and a moral man. When you worked in the wad-hole, I daresay you thought your own hut—although it was always, as I remember, a foul and slatternly place—a very pleasant sort of atmosphere by comparison with the closeness of the mine; and in like manner, I protest that I feel myself a pure and healthy soul with such a companion as yourself—you damnable and utter ruffian—you base wretch—you Cur.'

There was murder in the young man's eye, and the fingers of his right hand opened and shut convulsively, as though they were clutching for a weapon; but he answered not a word.

'Listen, you treacherous hound,' continued the doctor coolly, 'because I know it is wormwood for you to hear it, and because I like to see you greedy for my life, and yet not daring to lift your hand against me. That woman who is your slave yonder, became so by deceit and fraud. She was affianced to an honest man, and plighted faith to him upon this very spot not three years back. He left her, trusting to her loyalty; and loyal she would have remained, except for you.'

'A woman may change her mind, I suppose?'

muttered the other sullenly.

'Yes; but you persuaded her that George Adams had changed his mind.'

'And so he had, for all I know.'

'You liar! you knew that he was true as steel. You took advantage of your mother being postmistress to thieve the letters which George wrote to Mary, as well as those which Mary wrote to George. Then you persuaded her that silence meant forgetfulness, desertion, broken troth.'

'All stratagems are fair in love, they say,' answered the other with a ghastly smile.

'What! Robbery? Felony? Do you know what the law awards, Miles Ripson, to stratagems like that?'

'Who is to prove it?' muttered the young man huskily, and drawing a step nearer. 'Does any one guess at it, beside yourself?'

'Yes, thief.—I do not value your wrath at a pin's head; but if you did your worst, and slew me now, by some back-handed stab, or what not coward blow, it would not serve you. You would be hung, instead of being a felon for life—that's all. Another person beside me is aware of your guilt, and but for your wife's sake, would have denounced you long ago. The woman whom you ill-treat and despise has been hitherto your protectress—you gallows-bird. It is hard enough for her to be the victim of your brutality—to be conscious that the man she took for a fine fellow is a tyrant and a sot; but if she knew that the man she might have married, and who was worthy of her, loved her truly all along, and mourns her fate more deeply than his own, it would break her heart.—I see a devilish pleasure in your wicked face. Well, I cannot help that; but take care what you do. You hate your wife, I know, and will hate her worse now that I have told you this; but if she dies—if your ill-treatment drives her to the grave, as it already threatens to do—remember, the only shield between you and your punishment is thereby removed; and if again I do but hear of your ill-using that poor girl, as sure as I am a living man, I'll come myself, and take you by the throat, and cry: "This man is a thief;" I will, so help me Heaven!'

The doctor's huge frame shook with suppressed rage, and the great purple veins stood out upon his forehead like marks of stripes. "A drunken dog," you called me a while ago," continued he; 'be sure I will be a dog to watch you close—to give tongue to others of your doings—or to tear you down myself, if need should be. If I be a rogue to others, to you at least I will be the very guardian of the law.'

'If, in the heat of passion,' began Miles whimpering, 'I have said anything to offend you, doctor'—

'Don't answer me!' broke in the other with violence; 'don't dare to speak till I have done, you mean and cringing slave. You that have tempted your own mother, with her poor gray hairs, to risk her soul for you, to break her trust, to steal, and then when I call you "Thief," who say: "It was my mother," hold your base tongue! Her guilt, compared to yours, is innocence; and yours, by accusing her, is made more damnable by fiftyfold.—Don't speak, I say; don't dare even to lift your face, or I will spit upon it: but listen. The other person beside me at whose word you go to jail, and from thence to life-long penance, is the one on whose behalf I came up hither to-night. If my advice were taken, you would have nothing—not a single guinea—for the service that may be demanded of you; but I am instructed to make you the same offer as before.—Now, then, am I to ask the owls for a reply, or you, Miles Ripson?'

'I will take the hundred guineas,' muttered Miles reluctantly, 'having no choice.'

'That's well: I thought there would be virtue in the Wishing-gate. That matter, then, is settled. But for the rest, take heed and timely warning.—

Stand by, and let your master pass.' With that, the doctor turned his broad back upon his scowling companion, and slowly took the woodland pathway home.

BIRDS OF THE LEVANT.

WHILE the pelican has been fishing in the Cayster, or the Nile; while the owl has hooted on the towers of Afrasiab; while the swan, with its white breast, has floated up and down the windings of the Mæander, amid patches of blue and white water-lilies; while the thrush has poured forth her magic song from the trees around the tomb of Zeus; while the nightingale has been charming the waters of Tempe with her notes of sorrow—a hundred empires and kingdoms have risen, flourished, and disappeared on the shores of the Mediterranean. How comes it, we ask ourselves, that, on this globe, nearly all creatures are unchangeable except man? If we traverse the lilled plains of the Nile; if we ascend Lebanon, or pitch our tent on the banks of the Euphrates; if we plunge through the defiles of Taurus, or direct our footsteps athwart the mighty levels that stretch between it and the Euxine; if we cross the Hellespont, and prolong our wanderings through Thrace, Macedonia, and Epirus to the shores of the Adriatic, we shall move among the same families of birds as were the companions of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle. Whatever we may have done, they, as so many species, have molted no feather; but what was green or red then, is green or red still. Their song, too, when they sing, their scream, when it is their habit to scream, their flight, their nests, their food—all are identical with what they were before the rape of Helen. But where are the men whose forefathers went with spear and target to Troy? Where are the Medes and Persians, whose laws, the ancients thought, were never to know change? Where are the Egyptians with their hieroglyphics, their mummies, and their beautiful Macedonian queens? Where are the Idumæans, who built their seats amid the rocks—the Tyrians, the Sidonians, the Anakim, and the mountaineers of Gilead? All have melted away like the snows of last winter, and left no successors on the surface of the earth. If a man could eliminate from his experience all that belongs to his own species, he might go through the whole Levant without one sigh for the past. On the banks of the Nile, he might sit and behold at sunrise vast flights of pelicans stretching over his head, their white breasts tinged with bright pink by the morning light—he might watch them soar higher and higher into the blue, till what almost seemed an army on the wing, looks like a dark crooked line, or a series of small spots in the firmament. While his mind is intent on the movements of the giants of the air, his eye alights, perhaps, on a flight of white ibises, flying northward, and settling with their drooping tails like huge snow-flakes on the dark verdure of the sycamore. Close at hand, moveless as a relic of Egyptian art, stands the meditative stork, half-knee deep in some shallow part of the river, till a fish attracts his gaze and awakens his activity: he then ceases to be statueque, his whole ungainly figure falls into motion; he plunges his long bill into the mud, and gobbles up eagerly whatever he can catch. This, Homer saw when strolling leisurely through Asia Minor collecting materials for the *Iliad*; this amused Socrates, as, lying full length under the

plane-tree, he gazed at the shallow Cephissus while discussing love and logic with Phædrus.

If you sail up between the shining Cyclades, flights of sea-birds court your gaze on all sides, some settling on the rocks overhanging the sea, some moving in columns or wedges through the clear sky, directing their course across the Ægean towards the plains of Ionia, where, in former times, they witnessed the burning of Sardis, the campaigns of Agesilaus, and the thronging of barbarous cohorts and battalions towards Ilium. Few sights are more poetical than that of a body of wild swans careering through the air, over rivers, forests, and mountains; sometimes in search of food, sometimes for the mere pleasure of sporting through their aerial element. To them the old poet of Chios thus alludes:

Milk-white swans on Asia's flowery plains,
That o'er the windings of Cayster's springs,
Stretch their long necks, and wave their rustling
wings.

On northern coasts, the birds that frequent bogs and marshes are comparatively rare, because, with the increase of population and culture, the homes of these creatures are invaded, drained, and converted into cornfields. In the Levant, it is quite otherwise. Every bittern may there, if he lists, have a whole bog to himself, where he may boom at his ease

From morn till noon, from noon till dewy eve.

On any morass where water and earth mix and blend and produce wild-flowers, belonging, properly, to neither element, you may, early in the morning, behold representatives of nearly all the aquatic tribes—coots, wild-ducks, plungers, snipes, woodcocks, wild-geese—foraging about amid the mosses and flags in search of provender. In the woods hard by, the turtle-dove sits cooing to his mate, the ringdove nestles, the black-bird sings, while, through the air above, the cuckoo passes along like a wandering voice. If you climb the summits of Mimas or Olympus, the golden eagles that wheeled in airy circles about those peaks when the Dardanian shepherd wooed Aphrodite, in those love-lighted solitudes, wheel there still, with the glory of three thousand years upon their wings. Instead, however, of the sons of Priam, in Phrygian bonnets and purple mantles, they now behold the men of Kurdistan, with their wives in red boots, and children half-naked, walking after their flocks, or smoking such tobacco as Syria and Salonica alone can furnish. There is much pleasure, doubtless, in contemplating a cultivated landscape, dotted thickly with towns, villages, rustic homesteads, and church spires; but the feeling is tame and insipid compared with that which fills the bosom when, from some wild rock, you look down upon spreading plains where the wolf and the buffalo seem almost the only lords of the land. There your presence is scarcely noticed by birds of any kind: the kingfisher pursues his vocation in the stream at your feet; the owl looks out unmoved at you from his ivy bower; the hawk, whose piercing eyes, and flight almost invisible from its swiftness, made the Egyptians select him as an emblem of the divinity, perches on a laurel-bough at your side; the swan arches his white neck with the playfulness of a cat before you; while the cormorant and the sea-

mew eat their breakfast of fish close to the nose of your camel.

Everywhere, the early morning is made beautiful by birds. Refreshed by sleep, they emerge from the bosom of darkness, and hail with rapture the renewal of light. If, then, you take your stand on some lofty slope of Gargarus, and look eastward, you behold the whole mighty level of Asia Minor bathed in purple light, while behind the peaks of Caucasus, the reflection, as of a universe on fire, kindles the whole orient. You then appear to be watching the advent of creation, the tremulous blushing of earth and heaven in the overpowering presence of the Deity, who flings profuse splendour and glory over his nascent works. As you think and meditate, the wail of some solitary jackal awakens the echoes among the hills; the cawing of rooks overhead carries you by association to far western lands, though the force of your imagination is soon checked by the approach of birds of gorgeous plumage from beyond Sahara and the Mountains of the Moon. What balmy freshness then fills the air, what scent of wild-flowers, what incense from the young buds, from the pine, from the cedar, from the fir, from the fragrant linden, from the white-blossomed acacia, from the majestic and regal Vallona oak! If you go down by Ephesus or Miletus, you are encountered at certain seasons of the year by large flights of cranes, which, having done their work in Mozambique or Abyssinia, are coming northward to make war upon the frogs in the quagmires of Asia Minor. Yonder, amid the ever-green foliage of the arbutus, with its shining blossoms, or rich red fruit, which scents the air like a heap of strawberries, you perceive the golden-crested hoopoe, preferred by the ancient Greeks before the eagle, as the truest claimant of the bird-sceptre. To see this bird in his real home, you must cross the Ægean, and take up your stand amid the leafy glades of Parnes or Cithæron, whither of old he retired from the bustle of Athens, to exercise his authority in peace. As a king, he could not but dislike the noise and licence of a popular government, where everybody was his own king, and, as our neighbours express it, governed himself *tant bien que mal*. Several of his subjects were suspected of cherishing a hankering after the uplands of Hymettus, for sinister purposes—they were partial, it was thought, to the flavour of honey; and as the bees there piled up their fragrant white combs, scenting the mountain and dripping with pellucid dew, the honey-sucker and several of his companions hovered constantly over the beds of wild thyme, and took advantage of every opportunity to dip their little bills in forbidden sweets. The old comic poet of Attica, whose imagination rivalled that of Shakespeare in richness, suggested a very strange project to the birds of his time. The divinities of Olympus, and especially their monarch, Zeus, having grown somewhat exigent, he counselled the subjects of the hoopoe to erect a vast metropolis in the air, and by spreading out their wings on all sides, to hinder the ascent of the fumes of sacrifices and smoke of incense, on which the Olympians were supposed to live. By this means, he affirmed, the gods would soon be brought to reason, and made to understand that they depended entirely upon man for the supply of their larders. In the development of this grotesque fancy, the Athenian dramatist brings together all the birds of Greece, many of whose characteristic

notes are distinctly heard in his verses, twittering, chirping, or pouring forth their liquid voices in song.

It is difficult to connect any idea of happiness with cold. To enjoy life, you must have a genial atmosphere, which enables the heart to perform its functions with a thrill of satisfaction, and sends the blood tingling with pleasure through the veins. We talk of the merry month of May, of leafy June, of scorching July, of golden August; but the true type of the North is a man standing in a doubtful attitude, with one eye on the clouds, and the other on his umbrella, which he keeps ready to flap up at any moment against a shower. In many parts of the East, it is quite otherwise. Without fear of coughs or catarrhs, without shivering, without greatcoat, without umbrella, you may sit on rock or fallen tree, or recline at full length on the brown sward, listening to the cicada or the nightingale, while the sweet soft breeze, redolent of a thousand flowers, fans your cheek. Probably, traditions of the past enter largely into your feelings, and steep your fancy in poetry, which may account for the rapt delight inspired by listening even to the twittering of a sparrow amid the ruins of Chilminar, Palmyra, or Karnak. Here, in the highest temple ever reared by mortal hands, you may meditate or dream for many hours in the morning, undisturbed by a single footstep, till you fancy yourself alone with the past, and call up before you generations coeval with Menes. There is in Egypt a white eagle, not, properly speaking, an inhabitant, but a visitor from the interior, far beyond the sources of the Nile. This bird, as you sit on a fallen shaft, often perches himself on the summit of the ruin, and appears to be watching you as intently as you watch him. His whole frame is motionless except the eyes, which roll incessantly in their sockets, and assume at times a fierce expression, as if he meant to fly at your throat. Suddenly, however, his attention is called away by some sound inaudible to you, and off he flies towards the river. If you rise and watch him, you may behold his form disappear among the waters, and soon afterwards emerge again with prey in the beak. He is a fishing eagle, and lives on the mute dwellers in the Nile.

In the distant island of Crete, your eye and your ear are at once delighted by the form and notes of the blue thrush, the rarest bird in the Mediterranean. As you sit and listen on the southern slopes of Olympus, you behold the brilliant songster, seated, perhaps, on the waving bough of some golden willow, its little breast palpitating with music, invoking passionately the coming night—for the thrush never sings so sweetly as at evening's close, so that its latest song is often mistaken for that of the nightingale. Amid the deep gorges of the white mountains, which send their bases sheer out into the sea, you may often hear from the deck the lays of the thrush, which are scarcely terminated ere they are taken up by those of Philomela, so that for a while you almost forget the transition. Soon, however, your ear, if endowed with sensibility, detects the superiority of the queen of night, as in throbs and gushes, she commemorates the causes of her sorrow. In those latitudes, all nature seems to be but one instrument of music—everything is in harmony—the calm, deep-blue sky, the rocks, the wood-clad mountains, the streams, the ripple of the waves among white

pebbles upon the beach. Suddenly, a sharp, shrill cry is heard far up between the crags—it is the scream of the night-hawk, as it darts upon some prey gliding timidly through the darkness.

The true region of birds, however, is farther east, where Garganus overlooks the plains, where the Mæander winds, where Ephesus and Miletus in ruins, speak of Hellenic civilisation, where the Carduchian shepherd drives his flocks, where the Turk, calm and quiet, mutters: 'La illah, il ullah!' to himself at midnight, or smokes his refreshing pipe amid the splendours of the dawn.

Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime;
The fields are florid with unfading prime!

Even in December, marigolds and anemones spring from the turf beneath the olive-trees, myrtles are in full blossom, and in the groves the orange-trees display their golden fruit amid the dark-green foliage. Little more than a month later, the almond-trees are in flower; hyacinths and daffodils are profuse in the meadows; while the bees in every copse and thicket hum busily at their work. It is then extremely pleasant to sit at midnight on the house-top, and listen to such sounds as greet the ear at such an hour. Among these, one of the most extraordinary is the noise made by the cranes, which, high up in the air, call to each other, apparently that they may not miss their way in the dazzling moonlight. The imagination of the Arabs created a race of beings analogous to humanity, who could share the pleasure of the cranes by flying through the air, and gazing upon the beauty which earth displays in her sleep. This, in fact, was only attributing sense, reason, and the power of observation, to storks, cranes, and other night-wanderers, which must, they imagined, enjoy extreme delight while passing over deserts, broad rivers, lofty mountains, large cities, towers, towns, villages, and hamlets bathed in moonlight, or touched by the mystic glimmer of the stars. A favourite bird with the Muslims is the curlew, to which they attribute a knowledge of religious truth, affirming that, in its solitary flight, it pronounces incessantly one of the orthodox professions of faith: 'Lak, lak, lak! la Kharya Kalak fih il mulk'—God alone is king of the world, without second or companion. In the Great Desert, the traveller is often startled by this religious exclamation of the curlew, uttered in a sharp, shrill tone as he wings his way through the air. The belief is common in the East that all birds have a language, which, through incessant study, may be learned by man; and it is certain that these aerial creatures understand each other as well as we do. Upon superficial observation, their notes appear to be few, so that we arrive at the conclusion, that their ideas are so likewise; but this need not be the case, since every inflection of the voice with them, as with us, may convey different shades of meaning, so that their language may be far more copious than appears at first sight. Of course, they have made considerable proficiency in botany, natural history, and meteorology, since they would otherwise be unable to discern, as they do at a glance, the nature of plants, the character of animals, and the changes of the weather. By this knowledge, they preserve themselves from being poisoned, from attacking animals which they are unable to master, and from remaining longer in one climate than suits their health or their provisions. They are likewise extensively acquainted with geography, so that they can traverse vast

tracts of country without ever losing their way, directing their marches no doubt by observing certain mountains, rivers, or coasts, which, from their elevated points of observation, they discover at a great distance. When we ourselves desire to describe the shortest distance between any two places, we say, 'As the crow flies,' his flight being regulated with mathematical precision in a right line. Notions like these have led the orientals to indulge in wild speculations on the wisdom of the winged creation, which cannot only comprehend the present, but foretell the future; in which opinion several ancient nations concurred, persuading themselves that they might discover the course of coming events by the flight of birds, and the import of those events by the notes they uttered.

From this frolic of eastern fancy, the good folks about Parnes, Cithæron, and Hymettus make a terrible descent, and alight in the kitchen, in which birds of all sizes and colours are suspended for culinary purposes, from the wild-duck and the widgeon to the sycophas, beccafico, or ortolan of our northern vocabulary. Travellers who happen to be gourmands might, in the season of ripe figs, make a voyage to Attica, exclusively to taste of this rare delicacy in perfection. When brought to us, it is often stale and musty; but in Attica the sycophas comes to table sweet and fresh, dressed in a vine-leaf, and flavoured with the taste of its favourite food. Intending to devour him, man diligently studies his habits and manners. As soon as the figs begin to ripen, and put on that purple bloom more exquisite than even that of the banana, the sycophas appears in clouds, and settling on the stems of the huge green leaves, peeks adroitly at the rind of the fruit, which its bill penetrates, and draws its delicate nourishment from the pulp within. By this succulent food, the little garden-thief grows so fat that he experiences some difficulty in making his escape, when the lord of the creation, fowling-piece in hand, appears to terminate his delights. In multitudes, therefore, the sycophas falls, and after passing through the fire to the Moloch of the kitchen, is transferred in his vine-leaf shroud to the table of the epicure. A few years ago, and perhaps still in many parts, the falcon was used as a purveyor of delicacies, but not being gifted with the discrimination of his master, he often flew at birds not very well adapted for eating. Instead, for example, of a fat pigeon, he would pounce upon a speckled owl, which, in truth, is no better than a winged cat, feeding on mice and other vermin. In one season of the year, nature precipitates a delicacy on the Levantines, of which we can scarcely form an idea—we mean the quail, which, breeding Heaven knows where, is blown, as it were by a hurricane, into Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece. The partridge is fine, especially when cooked in Burgundy, and flavoured with its red wine; but the quail without this accompaniment, for which is substituted a tumbler of Nile-water, must, we think, be allowed to be far more delicate eating. The plover, too, wherever found, makes good its claim to be ranked among the foremost of edible birds, though there is some risk of its being exterminated from England by the rage for its eggs. Desirous of making an experiment on a new kind of game, we once attempted to devour a pelican. What a disappointment! From its breast, when roasted, we hewed a slice larger than

could have been obtained from the fattest Norwich turkey. But what was it like? We can compare it to nothing but bull-beef tasting like a fish! No civilised stomach could relish so Cyclopean a feast, so it was handed over to the savages who accompanied us, who speedily picked it to the bones.

MARRIED WELL.

IN NINETEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER VII.—A 'YOUNG PERSON' DESIRES A SITUATION 'IN ANY CAPACITY NOT MENIAL.'

THE little bird that sees everything has told us what was the origin of the fire; but not a single chirp of information was given to coroner or jury. To the public, then, it remained a mystery. The confidential maid was convinced in her own mind, and eager to commit unintentional perjury by swearing that she had turned the key in the lock of the boudoir-door, and volunteered the conjecture, that the 'poor dear' had concealed matches about herself 'unbeknown.' It was surmised that Mrs Finch, after ringing violently the bells which had aroused the drowsy servants, had devoted herself to Miss Ewart, and fallen a victim to her devotion. Some of the servants had heard Mrs Finch's voice calling out their names, and shrieking 'Help! fire!' but they had been unable to reach the boudoir, in consequence of the smoke, and had been 'bustled out of the house' by the first men who arrived. All that could be made out for certain was, that the house had been burned to the ground, and that Miss Ewart and Mrs Finch had perished in the flames.

George Ewart, at his aunt's death, came in for eight thousand pounds; Ellen Finch, at her mother's death, came in for orphanage and the loss of even the small pension her mother had received. It is true Nelly had still her twenty pounds a year; but twenty pounds a year, paid quarterly, or half-yearly, with or without extreme punctuality, will not go very far. Man may want but little here below; but woman, especially a young woman, born a lady, bred a lady, and with ladylike tastes in dress and other matters, wants considerably more than twenty pounds a year, which would hardly find her in bread and cheese and bombazine. Her friends confidently predicted that she would marry well; and Caroline and Augusta Platt thought she had only to be introduced into the proper circles to have a choice given her of coronets. But that matter of introduction is a very difficult and delicate one. The duke does marry the actress; the heir does marry the governess; the man of fortune does marry his sister's companion—but not often. Oftener than once in ten thousand times, do you think? Oftener than angels are in the habit of visiting their friends? Much depends on the footing on which you are introduced into circles; and, generally speaking, dukes, heirs, and men of fortune, though they find themselves on the same ladder with actresses, and governesses, and companions, are conscious that they do not stand on the same rungs, seldom draw up to their own height the beauty standing down lower; and if they descend with leer, and sigh, and pretty compliment to her who graces a lower step, it is only to return again to their own elevation, having caused her to fly from her perilous position, or having pushed her off into the abyss of shame.

At least so says the wicked world. At anyrate, Mrs Platt and Dr Snell were not so ambitious for Nelly as were Caroline and Augusta. Mrs Platt was sure that Nelly would marry well, but her notions of a good marriage fell considerably short of coronets; so also did Dr Snell's; and Dr Snell thought of something else which had not yet occurred to Mrs Platt. Two months had elapsed since Mrs Finch's sad death; and time had begun to take off the edge of Nelly's grief. Mrs Platt was the best of women, and her daughters were the best of girls; but Dr Snell knew that the best of women is occasionally possessed of a knagging and querulous demon, which cannot be exorcised until words have been spoken, or manners put on, or hints thrown out which nearly break the heart of a 'stranger within the gates,' which can be borne only by those who have children's rights; and that the best of girls must grow weary before long of a presence they were by no means bound to endure, and which reminded them continually of their own inferiority. 'We must find you a situation, little bird,' he had one day said to Nelly; and Nelly, with tears of gratitude in her eyes, had expressed her thanks and her desire for the change.

Dr Snell therefore sounded all his patients, and at last discovered the very thing he wanted. An old married couple, who had brought up a niece from infancy to the age of seven-and-twenty, had been treated with the basest ingratitude. The niece, after becoming intimately acquainted with all their wants, ways, habits, and means, after making herself absolutely indispensable (so far as their bodily comforts were concerned) to them, made an arrant fool of herself (in their estimation), and married a young man of eight-and-twenty struggling with the world. 'And,' said old Mr Grimshaw, 'they actually called here the other day, doctor, and asked if I wouldn't wish them happiness, and do what I could for them.'

'Could for them,' chimed in Mrs Grimshaw with an injured air, shutting her eyes, and throwing up her chin.

'Well,' said the doctor, 'what did you say?'

'Oh! I wished them happiness, doctor, and said if anything occurred to me, I would do it: so, after they had gone, it occurred to me I had left Jemima a thousand pounds, and I would go at once and make it five hundred.'

'Five hundred!' echoed Mrs Grimshaw in a tone of discontent.

'The worst of it is,' said the doctor, 'Jemima is just the woman to have a large family.'

'She'd better not,' growled old Grimshaw; 'if she does, I'll not leave her a farthing.'—But how Jemima was to avert—even if she ever heard of—the threat, it is difficult to imagine.

To this promising couple, poor Nelly went as companion, Dr Snell having previously explained to Nelly what sort of persons they were: 'The man's a hypochondriac, my dear,' said he, 'and the woman little better than a nonentity: she is a sort of shadow and echo of the man.—And now, mind, if they treat you badly, just let me know, and I will see to it. Old Grimshaw is rather afraid of me; he believes I can give him pain or ease at my pleasure, and certainly I have a few harmless but nasty drugs with which I may avenge your wrongs. But perhaps I might in that way make your position more unpleasant. Anyhow, if you do not let me know when you have any complaint to make, I will never forgive you.'

CHAPTER VIII.—NELLY'S LOVERS.

When a beautiful girl, not yet twenty years of age, is left as Nelly was left after the fatal fire at Wadsworth House, it is not she alone who is in a delicate position. Nelly, at the parties to which good Miss Ewart had insisted upon her going, had made many acquaintances, and attracted many admirers, especially amongst the younger men. Of them, some had contented themselves, after hearing of her bereavement, with oaths expressive of consternation and discontent at the 'hard lines' which fall to the lot of some 'poor gals,' with suppositions that she would 'go in for the gov'ness business, and that sort of thing;' and with opinions that it was 'just on the cards she might marry well' (in which case, of course, she was not likely to marry one of them); others, of a more chivalrous turn, were ready to offer her hand, heart, purse, prospects, and all that was theirs. But of the latter, one did not even know where Nelly was housed; another did not know the Platts; and all knew that some time must elapse before they could talk to Nelly about hands and hearts. There is, moreover, great awkwardness connected with the paying of sympathetic visits to a young woman: graybeards may see her alone, may take her hand and pat it caressingly, and may promise she 'shall never want a friend;' but young men, except under very peculiar circumstances, can only shew their condolence by making 'kind inquiries' (acknowledged by the young woman's protectress), and leaving cards. At anyrate, just at first; and the progress of a personal interview is so slow and trying, that the sympathetic callers soon drop off. Messrs Ewart and Fortress, however, knew the Platts intimately; and the former, having in a manner shared Nelly's trouble, and having met her so often at his aunt's, was a sort of privileged person, whom she could see (in the presence of Mrs Platt or a Miss Platt), when she could not face visitors in general. George Ewart, therefore, had seen a great deal of Nelly during the two months which elapsed before her engagement to the Grimshaws. Fortress had called once—three days after the catastrophe—and had, of course, asked only for Mrs Platt, to whom he had come to say good-bye before he left England; and his only consolation was, that Nelly would hear from Mrs Platt how anxiously he had inquired after Nelly's welfare. 'Ah me!' he thought, as he went his way, 'she needs some prop to lean upon; and I, who would cheerfully give her my life, cannot ask her even to share my home. Had no evil come upon her, I was bound to silence; and now I am doubly bound by delicacy.'

George Ewart also, though he was more remarkable for breadth of shoulders than delicacy of feelings, was restrained from making his 'little speech.' On the one hand, Nelly gave him no opportunity—her heart was evidently in the grave with her mother; and, on the other, a change had come over himself. He was a selfish man, with somewhat gross tastes: the eight thousand pounds he had come into, added to two thousand he had before possessed, suggested to his unrefined mind the possibility (he had never doubted the propriety) of having one good 'fling' (as he would have said) before (to use his own language) he 'knuckled under;' that is, became engaged to be married. He was not capable of love, but he liked Nelly almost to the extent of

loving; and he believed (and he was right) that Nelly was not far from loving him; for they had suffered in common, and that is much with a woman. Besides, he was a man of tact, and careful of outward observances; and hid the worst parts of his character from even Nelly's eyes. He was well enough to look upon: slightly above the middle height, with dark curly hair, a good forehead, merry eyes, and shapely mouth; he was the best oar in his college-boat, and a good cricketer; his manner was easy, graceful, and *débonnaire*; he danced well, and he talked pleasantly; and when he had got his degree, he was to take orders (and Nelly inclined towards the clergy). It was his last long vacation; and, up to the time of his aunt's death, he had no further intentions than to spend his vacation quietly in courting Nelly, go up and take his degree, pay out of his two thousand pounds as much as would be required for settlement of his debts (for he was of the generous nature that buys freely on credit), keep the rest to eke out a curate's stipend, get ordained, and carry off Nelly to share his humble curacy. But now he would have a 'fling' first, take his degree, get ordained, buy a living, and raise Nelly to the dignity of a rector's wife, if not at once, at any rate in a year or two. And so the 'little speech' had not been made when Nelly went as 'companion' to the Grimshaws; and, consequently, it would not have been correct for George Ewart to call on Nelly unless he should accompany Mrs Platt or some other such personage.

CHAPTER IX.

Arcades ambo.—Virgil.
A queer couple.—New Translation.

On the day on which Nelly was expected at the Grimshaws', old Grimshaw sat after luncheon in an easy-chair, with a large silk handkerchief round his head, a green shade over one eye (which he maintained, against the opinion of Dr Snell, was weaker than the other), and thick woollen gloves upon his hands, to protect them from the wasps (for it was September); and opposite him, in another easy-chair, sat, drowsily nodding, his wife and Echo. A servant was removing the things.

'The young woman's coming to-day,' growled old Grimshaw—'isn't she?'

'Isn't she?' asked the Echo, starting up and addressing the servant.

'I hunderstood so, mum,' said Mary Anne; 'we've took and got 'er room to rights.'

'When the young woman comes,' again growled old Grimshaw, 'let's have no drawing-room or nonsense—she'd better be shewn in here at once.'

'She'd better be shewn in here at once,' said the Echo, passing on the remark to Mary Anne.

'And the young woman's box, or whatever she's got,' once more growled old Grimshaw, 'don't let it be left in the hall for me to break my neck over; let it be taken up-stairs to her room at once.'

'Let it be taken up-stairs to her room at once,' said the Echo, looking towards Mary Anne.

'I daresay she'll expect to have her cab-fare paid,' began old Grimshaw; but before he could finish his sentence, a smart carriage drew up to the door, the knocker thundered, the bell pealed, old Grimshaw swore a great oath, and the Echo very nearly passed it on to Mary Anne, but was fortunately prevented by a timely cough. 'Shew 'em into the drawing-room, whoever it is,' shouted old Grimshaw, and 'Into the drawing-room, who-

ever it is,' feebly repeated the Echo, as Mary Anne, with a muttered regret that she hadn't 'cleaned' herself, flew out to face the stalwart footman.

Mrs Platt and Miss Finch were duly announced; and old Grimshaw, who had been a gentleman before he became a hypochondriac, declared his intention of going up-stairs to them at once, and giving Mrs Grimshaw time to 'change her cap.' As he entered the drawing-room, he banished for ever from his mind the 'young-woman' theory; for he felt in his heart that the young lady who rose simultaneously with Mrs Platt, and waited modestly to be presented to him, might well have consorted with duchesses. Her black dress was elegantly made, and her black bonnet shewed her delicate complexion to advantage. Her wavy brown hair and her large hazel eyes struck the hypochondriac with amazement; and the expectant air which had caused her lips to part shewed teeth which almost dazzled his eyes. And when, after ceremony had been duly honoured, she put her small hand in his proffered paw, and said sweetly and confidently: 'I hope, Mr Grimshaw, I shall be all you require,' old Grimshaw seemed to hear pleasant music, and replied, as he let go the little hand: 'All and more, I have no doubt, Miss Finch.'

Now Mrs Grimshaw appeared on the scene, and was astounded; and good Mrs Platt, by the use of tact, was enabled to go and inspect Nelly's room; and Mrs Grimshaw, who had been under the impression that a 'young woman' was coming, was fain to tell a variety of untruths to account for the state in which the room was found; and strict injunctions were laid on Mary Anne to carry out improvements which vexed her soul; and Mary Anne descended to cook in the kitchen, and solemnly declared her firm conviction that respect would have to be shewn to the new 'companion,' upon which cook was an advocate for simultaneous 'warning.' But when cook saw Nelly, she changed her mind; and even Mary Anne gave in at last to the force of cook's arguments, who maintained that Nelly was evidently 'quite the young lady, and there couldn't be no harm in behaving respectful to the likes of her.' Besides, cook and Mary Anne were fully agreed that, if Nelly pleased, she might marry well.

SEPTEMBER.

I.—MORNING.

The wasp feeds in the hollow peach;
The thistle-down is blowing, blowing;
The fern is dead; and the morning red
In the eastern cloud is glowing.
The holly oak-staff is broken in two,
And the weed-fires are all flaring;
Time is shaking the sluggish sands,
And the year, the year is wearing.

II.—EVENING.

The clouds bank up in sullen heaps,
And the mist is drifting, drifting;
In slanting lines, through the coppery pines,
The peevish rain is sifting.
In the west, upon a golden shore,
Night's blackest waves are breaking;
And in the rain and wind, the leaves
With palsied fear are shaking.

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